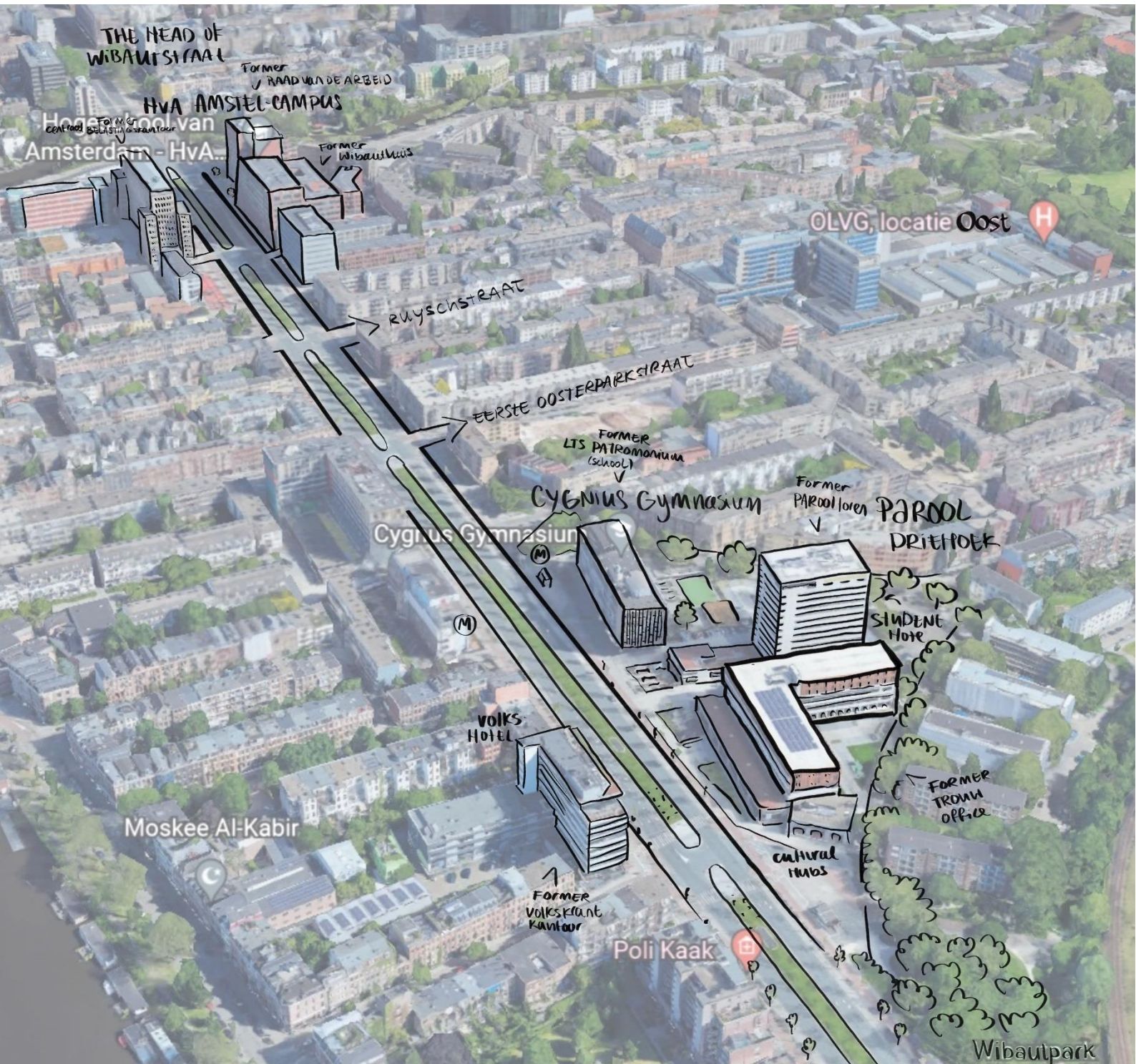


Post-war gems along Wibautstraat

An overview of the historical architecture in Wibautstraat



Abstract

Unfortunately a lot of post-war buildings are considered space makers for newly builds, due to current norms and regulations. This results in demolition, which is harmful with the ever changing taste in architecture. A lot of public buildings along the Wibautstraat originate from after the second world war. These Post-war buildings correspond to social and economic events throughout history and represent their architectural zeitgeist. This research will look at the correlation between the urban development of Wibautstraat and the public buildings along the street. Answering the question: How did architecture contribute to reshaping Wibautstraat over the years?

Several architectural movements were accruing in the street after the war. For example upcoming functional architecture which was contradicting to traditional architecture, popular in the 50's, and later on modern architecture, which was popular in the 60's. Municipal institutions were placed at the head of Wibautstraat, creating a grand allure within the street, creating a monumental gate into the city centre. This was then followed by a rising economical situation using space for more office buildings, creating the iconic newspaper district on the other side of the street in the 70's. The office buildings contributed to the increase of traffic on the Wibautstraat, resulting in the first drastic urban changes. As a reaction to the unsatisfaction of inhabitants about the municipal shifted their focus on providing social housing. The introduction of the new underground metro line was connecting the city centre with surrounding neighbourhoods and help to regulate the upcoming traffic. But unfortunately it had negative effects on the street image in the 80's and 90's. Entering the 2000, a new, and bigger, plan was presented to transform Wibautstraat and replace that negative image. This was done by introducing new functions, like the HvA Campus and hotels, along the street and providing a cohesive look by adding greenery. The current municipal plans, in which Wibautstraat contributes, provide the opportunity to participate in experimental projects like Knowledge Mile, since 2021. This plan will introduce new methods and ideas for making the existing city green. With these educational projects the municipality wants to create Kenniskwartieren for advocating future developments in Amsterdam. Wibautstraat does not only provide for a direct road connection, but also introduces a pleasant neighbourhood with a green boulevard.

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Introduction

Post-war architecture changes the way we look at heritage.

Right after the second world war, cities focused mostly on their reconstruction and the housing problems. The following years architecture started to expand in size, often as a counter reaction to previous work, addressing social issues. Post-65, represent the time where functionalism based on principles by modernism takes shape in large scale architecture and urban designing (Ibelings, 1995). The experimental nature resulted in new building methods using mainly concrete, often for a sober appearance. With the current demands in housing, these buildings in particular are easily removed to make space for new ones, even though this results in more expenses (De Back & Kuipers, 2008). Next to this, before 2014, the law didn't allow any heritage recognition for buildings younger than 50 years. One of the biggest problems with Post-war buildings is that they don't comply to the current regulations and often feel outdated. The government is trying to create more awareness for these typologies as demolition means losing potential 'young heritage'. In doing so the value of buildings under 50 years are being kept secured and they continue to represent their zeitgeist. The department of Monuments and Archaeology started making a broad inventory on capturing heritage built after 1965 throughout Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2017). This has resulted in among others a list of top 100 buildings selected as young heritage in Amsterdam. Next to this publications have been publicised focussing on various regions in Amsterdam. Nevertheless one particular street, which has two national monuments, has not been analysed in publications. Wibautstraat, located in the east region of Amsterdam, is currently a big traffic route in Amsterdam, housing alongside several facilities like (student-)hotels, the educational institute HvA Amstelcampus and Cugnus Lyceum and cultural hubs. Some facilities are housed in transformed Post-war buildings, while others are still untouched. From traditional monuments to brutalist bunkers, it all started with a railroad connection between Amsterdam and Utrecht, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The street entailed a station since 1843, called Weesperstation, that was well known for its British construction designs (Vaillant, 2019). Unfortunately the construction of a new train station, Amstelstation, positioned in the extension of future Wibautstraat made Weesperstation obsolete and unnecessary. The government took this opportunity and revived the streets function as a gateway into the historic city centre, to improve the accessibility in Amsterdam. From the 1920's the government of Amsterdam started working on the urban developments and expansion plan for Amsterdam, known as the AUP, concluded in 1935. A key person in developing this was C. van Eesteren, proposing new strategies and modern methods. He would address problems like traffic, that would determine the shape of the city (Stadsplan Amsterdam, 2003). This included the reconstruction plans for Wibautstraat.

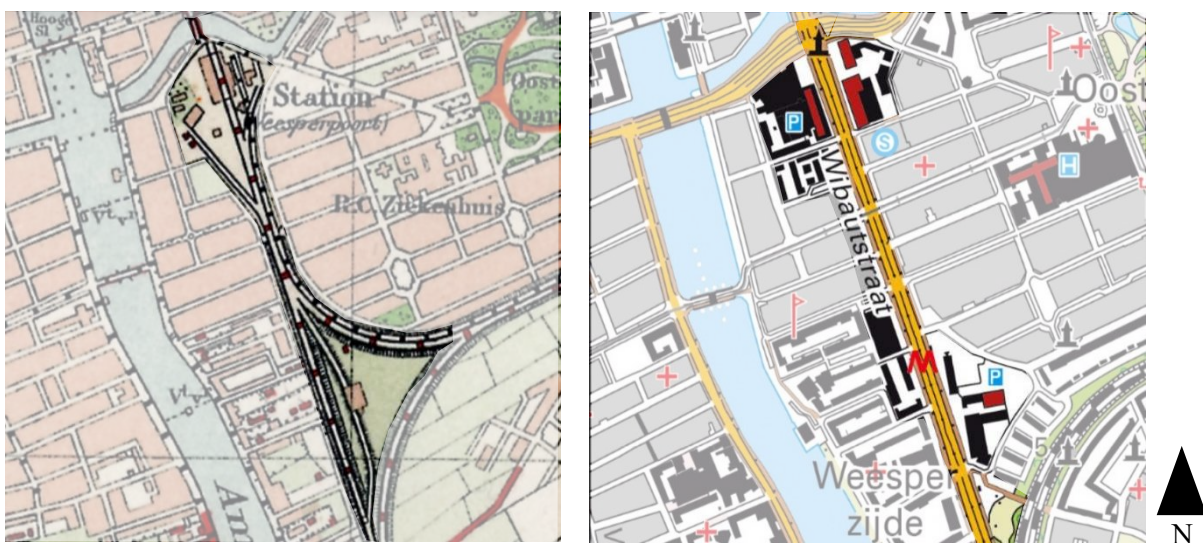


Figure 1: Map of Wibautstraat in 1935 and in 2022.

If plans for Wibautstraat were focused on providing accessibility in to the city, it can be asked how further urban developments were processed in Wibautstraat. In this this research the main focus lays on the public buildings along the Wibautstraat constructed after the war and understanding their architectural zeitgeist. Hereby the following question will be answered:

How did architecture contribute to reshaping Wibautstraat over the years?

This research highlights public buildings related to Post-war architectural movements, constructed in Wibautstraat throughout history. The historical elements will be elaborated in 5 chapters, presenting an overall historic view on how Wibautstraat is portrayed. They follow a chronologic order dividing three parts: architectural movements since the 50's, followed with urban developments in the 70's and lastly the transformation of Wibautstraat since 2000. The years along the chapters are a general designation and do not imply on boxing architectural movements within these time periods. The public buildings have been researched using archival material found at the Stadsarchief in Amsterdam and the archive of Monumenten en Archeologie Amsterdam. In addition to this online publications of newspapers and official municipal documentation have been analysed.

Chapter one: Architecture along Wibautstraat 1950-1960

Before the second world war, Wibautstraat connected the surrounded residential areas built in the nineteenth century with the historic city centre through one straight axe. After dealing with the housing shortage time and money were invested in the Wibautstraat planning to build governmental buildings with monumental appearances along this axe. The use of traditional architecture was quite popular from the 50's for governmental institutes (Ibelings, 1995). Resulting in a monumental gate of municipal institutions on the north-west side of Wibautstraat.

The first institutional building on the Wibautstraat is Het Gebouw van de Raad van de Arbeid, designed by architect C.J. Blaauw (1885-1947) from Amsterdam. He was a pioneer in the early Amsterdamseschool movement, but moved on to a more sober and strict expression in his later work (Blaauw, C.J./Archief, 2000). Blaauw received the commission for an institutional building in 1939, making this his last building design without ever seeing it finished. The building was completed in 1951, four years after he passed away under the supervision of architect H. Zwiers (1900-1992). The design of the building was monumental and stately, benefitting the Wibautstraat in giving it the demanded allure. Besides being the first institutional building this was also the first post-war building built on the street. The building is 37 meters high designed with a traditional architectural expression



Figure 2: Het Gebouw van de Raad van Arbeid (1953), first public building in Wibautstraat.

in a functional building. This is visible in the use of classical elements like symmetry, big entrances and the use of natural stone in the façade (Ibeling, 1995). When looking at the building from the street, the first glance goes to the entrance, accompanied by two grand statues and the uniform brick façade. At the top it is visible that the roof is extended with decorated studs underneath (Schilt, 2006).

New plans were made for the second building on the Wibautstraat following up in 1953. This building was designed by traditionalist and Rijksbouwmeester at that time, G. Friedhoff (1892-1970) assisted by M. Bolten (1916-2002). The municipal was in need of a central tax office, calling it De Centraal Belastinggebouw, Wibautstraat could provide space for this. Exceeding the height of Het Gebouw van de Raad van de Arbeid, this office building was the tallest in Amsterdam. The building has a grand



Figure 3: The traditional Centrale Belastinggebouw (1958) is now part of the Stalin Ale. The wide street is not overcrowded with cars, making the area safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

entrance, decorated with a scutcheon and aligned with two stories high structural columns designed to optimize light coming through. The main building is 11 stories high in a rectangular shape surrounded by 4 corner pavilions reaching 9 stories. The façade also has an uniform brickwork with small details at the top. These are a row of round arches with blue-yellow mosaic tiling underneath a characteristic sloped roof.

The prominent and defining traditional architectural appearance got a lot of criticism in the early 50's. Due to its large scale and lack of human connection it became associated with a political charge, which could be negative after the war (Van Thoor, 2006). Nevertheless the building was designed with functional aspects, using brick, glass and concrete. Friedhoff used new innovating techniques like a concrete structure, eliminating load bearing functions in the façade to built fast and cheap. In addition to this he made the façade not only aesthetically but also performing climatologic and acoustically by using brickwork (Wijers, 1998, p.42). Creating a monumental gate before entering the city centre.

The functionalists, another well used architectural style at that time period, stood against this traditional approach. The resemblance between them was to strive for simplicity and rationalism (Ibeling, 1995). But the traditionalist designed mostly monumental institutional buildings, mainly focussing on appearance. Whilst the functionalists concerned themselves with a functional and economical approach, focussing on, for example, social relationships. This functional ideology was also referred in the AUP, which started to take shape during the reconstruction period, since 1945.

Next to being the direct transit road to the new Y-tunnel, it was also the perfect place to meet this contradicting movement, when de Christelijke Stichting Patrimoniums Nijverheidsscholen commissioned to built an educational institution, the former school LTS Patrimonium, in 1953. The chosen architects, J.B. Ingewersen and C. de Geus, were inspired by the Unité d'habitation Marseille by Le Corbusier creating a different kind of monumental building in the middle of Wibautstraat (Het Nieuwe Instituut, n.d.). The building is using modules as the main concept in *beton-brut* leaving the concrete visible. The whole building could be rearranged horizontally and vertically, figure 4 shows a visual image of this grid. The building consists of a basement, reaches five stories high and is strategically turned, not aligned with the road. The rotation optimizes sunlight entering the building and also creates an open space in front of it allowing interaction between public and private. The school was originally a mechanic school, which resulted in grand halls and parted classrooms. In the 90's the school got renovated to reach the desired more modern requirements while still honouring the original design and tribute to a Dutch Le Corbusier (Abrahams, 1997). Both LTS Patrimonium and Het Centraal Belastinggebouw have been given a national monumental status in 2009.



Figure 4: LTS Patrimonium (1956) the first counter movement in Wibautstraat, following the functionalistic approach.

Following up, modernism started to evolve from the 50's to the 60'. It is hard to say when particular movements started and ended as they intertwined in a (re-)active way. The modern movement took functional principles and exceeded architecture and urban design to a bigger scale (Ibeling, 1995). While the economy started to recover, since the second world war, the best way to describe the modern approach was as: building with less time and costs by repetition. New building systems, using concrete excessively, made production faster and cheaper resulting in expansions with monotone neighbourhoods. For better accessibilities, as the traffic grew exponentially, highways and roads around and in the city were being added or improved. As an important transit route, the Wibautstraat was a good location to position office buildings.



Figure 5 Wibauthuis (1970) a true modernistic governmental institute, now demolished. The building reacts with the street that provides new public transport for better accessibility.

In 1963 the Centraal gebouw voor de bouwtechnische diensten, got permission to built a modern office building along the landmarks at the head of Wibautstraat. This municipal institution was called De Dienst Publieke Werken, seen in figure 5. Wijers (1998, p. 18) describes this moment as a sign for the need of a different mindset on architecture and changes in the balance between political and social power. De Dienst Publieke Werken was coordinated by Ben Merkelbach (1901-1961), who was stadsbouwmeester in 1956 of Amsterdam organising the built environment and advising the College B&W. This office building was designed by N. Gawronski (1925-2021) and was his first project, kicking off his architectural career. The building consists of two main volumes, with one pushed a bit back. In Figure 5 it is visible how the front square is favouring cars with parking space and

asphalted roads. The construction was done in prefab concrete, which was still considered a new method, resulting in a more affordable and open space plan. The façade had a sober and clean expression constructed out of a glass curtain wall, contradicting its statue like neighbours, this wasn't loved by all. Unfortunately this building was demolished in 2007 after receiving the status: *Ugliest building in Amsterdam* (Het Parool, 2007). Which is a great loss for Wibautstraat, because of the invaluable modernistic approach which could be considered young heritage, never to be constructed again (Colebrander, 2022).



Figure 6: An overview in 1964 of Wibautstraat showing De Wibauthuis (left), Het Belastingkantoor (right) and de Patrimonium (far back) that is not aligned with the straight street lines in Wibautstraat.

Figure 6 shows a nice overview from the point of view of the governmental institutes, filling up one side of Wibautstraat. This concluded all governmental institutes in Wibautstraat, but continued showing a lot of potential for the economical growth. This could be attributed to the significant amount of freedom property developers received since the 60's (Verlaan, 2013). The government liked the idea of further development due to contribution of new offices, trying to advocate newspapers to this district.

Chapter two: The paper district in Wibautstraat and traffic jam 1960-1970

The beginning of the now so-called Parooldriehoek, housing Het Parool, Trouw and De Volkskrant began after a declined offer, wanting to position the homebase in the city centre.

Het Parool started as a resistance newspaper during the second World War. First with just a newsletter on July 25 in 1940 and soon publishing their first illegal issue in 1941, reporting events and counter-reaction to the German occupiers. After the war Het Parool started a foundation for supporting the surviving relatives of the newspaper staff. This foundation still exists and is the main share-holder of the Perscombinatie since 1968 (Lambiek, 1990). When moving office spaces, the company was in need of a bigger office building. The initial design, by the architectural firm Van den Broek en Bakema (since 1951) for the Paroolcomplex had been made to be situated on Rokin in the city centre. These plans were not approved as high rise buildings did not benefit the historic city. In addition to this, the city centre would not be accessible for a big newspaper business (Kloos, 1981). So in 1958 the high rise building was welcomed with open arms in Wibautstraat.

The building was needed for the production of the newspaper, including a printing house and office space for editors, requiring a multifunctional building. The architects achieved this by creating a highrise tower, which became iconic for the Paroolcomplex, connected to a low rise building. Van den Broek en Bakema followed the modernistic ideology designing the Paroolcomplex. The two volumes were continuously searching for interaction between form and function and a direct connection with the street (Ibelings, 2000). The façade was designed using concrete, steel and glass, trying to create a sober appearance. Due to these intricate connections various facilities could be used separately by multiple parties, for example by another newspaper. Trouw joined the Paroolcomplex building after De Volkskrant moved in across the street, completing the newspaper district in Wiboutstraat.

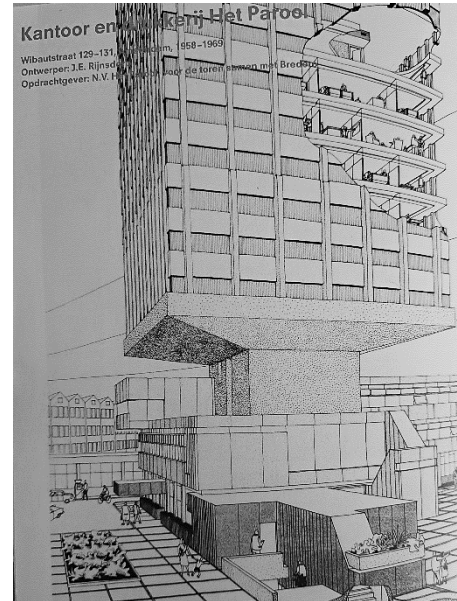


Figure 7: Design sketch for De Parooltoren, by Van den Broek en Bakema in 1958.

De Volkskrant, the oldest of the three newspapers started out as a Catholic newspaper in 1919 until the relocation to Wibautstraat 1965, where Mooij (2011) describes it as losing their professional Catholic identity. Both Trouw and De Volkskrant joined De Perscombinatie in 1975, possessing less than 30% of the shares. Later on, in the 80's, De Volkskrant became the main source of income,

helping namely Het Parool financially (Mooij, 2011). De Volkskrantgebouw was designed by an architectural father-and-son firm positioned in Rotterdam, called De Gebroeders Kraayvanger (since 1927). They were very active during the reconstruction period of Rotterdam with a traditional background. The architects pursued a completely different approach for a newspaper office, because their design concept was about reaching plasticity. The façade was made with alternating mirrored glass and white/grey tiling, making it respond to the typography of De Volkskrant.

This resulted in a simple rectangular shape as the main building, reaching 7 stories high including an accessible



Figure 8: De Volkskrant gebouw (1965) is provided with big letters referring to a Newspaper office. The Parooltoren, on the opposite side of the street, is reflected in the facade.

The building does not reach for a connection with the urban context, as it is designed as an individual object (Wijers, 1998).

Both newspapers were not estranged from one another as they are closely connected to each other through their head publisher, De Perscombinatie NV (Verlaan, 2013). The position of the now two newspapers was not a coincidence, but rather strategically. The printing house located in the Paroolcomplex was used by both newspapers, due to their difference in daily activity. While still remaining explicitly independent, Het Parool was considered an evening newspaper and De Volkskrant a morning newspaper, alternating the use of the press.



Figure 9: Het Parool and Trouw are located together in the Paroolcomplex (1978) represented with different font letters on top of the building. The building is based on the architectural movement of the School, (left corner) but is constructed with a more modern approach using glass, steel and concrete.

Trouw's transition to the Wibautstraat was less smoothly. Trouw also started as an illegal journal in 1943. Due to the rise of TV-commercials since the 60's, the paper lost a lot of income and worked up a lot of debt over the years. To improve the situation Trouw joined De Stichtig Christelijke Pers hoping to achieve financial support, but over time this decision made it very difficult to joining De Perscombinatie, which resulted in a conflicted management (Bootsma, 2018). It took almost 2 years for Trouw to join De Paroolcomplex.

In 2007 the three newspapers moved away from Wibautstraat into another multi-company building in Amsterdam.

The rise of offices at the Wibautstraat and traffic, which significantly increased since the 50's, started to take a toll. In the second half of the 60's leading into the 70's the inhabitants were not happy about the urban developments, making statements in board meetings and journals. The current situation at that time was being described as: a street with colossal buildings hovering around the street, which was turned into a car circuit (Wibautbuurt naar rechter, 1976). As is seen in image 10, the traffic had an overpowering view on the street causing a negative atmosphere and (noise-) polluting the surrounded neighbourhoods. The shared feelings of inhabitants for prioritizing office buildings over creating proper housing resulted in protests, which led to dropping the new plans for reshaping the street. The municipality planned on increasing the amount of car lanes from three to four to facilitate both passenger cars and heavy transport, These plans encouraged the statements about Wibautstraat as: The Ugliest street of Amsterdam (Het Parool, 2017). The government started to shift and prioritised better social housing in the outskirts. The biggest one in Amsterdam was Bijlmer, which would be connected with the new underground metro to the city.



Figure 10: An intersection with Wibautstraat and Ruyschstraat in ca. 1970. The street is designed for passengers cars and more heavy traffic, spaced out in 3 lanes for each direction. The tram is still present in the middle lane and parking space is provided along the street. The amount of activity has significantly increased.

Chapter three: Brutalist architecture along Wibautstraat 1970-1980

In 1968 the government of Amsterdam started making plans for a new metro line, called the Oostlijn. With the new developments in Bijlmer this metro line would connect central station with the south-east region of Amsterdam. Creating a new form of public transport, the line would be above and below ground levels, resulting in the oldest metro line of Amsterdam. *'The opening of the Metro Oostlijn in the late 1970's marked a revolutionary expansion of the public transport network in Amsterdam.'* (Bremen et al., 2020, pg. 5). The aim was to reduce the traffic, which would result in a decreasing demand for parking space.

In 1969, discussions arose about using the underground metro system as public shelters, as this could be made in combination with other structures. De Dienst Bescherming Bevolking, established in 1952, was a separate governmental service responsible for, among others, setting up emergency services, protecting governmental institutions and building shelters. Several stations were selected including Wibautstraat. The station on Wibautstraat was designed below ground, see image 11, and would have a capacity to shelter 6000 people. The Director of the G.V.B. and director of P.W. informed *Zijne excellentie de minister van binnenlandse zaken* that the shelter facilities would not affect the daily use of the stations in a letter written in 1969, which led to approval of this proposal in 1970. The overall amount of time it took to build the metro line was around 12 years, starting with the design made by Ben Spängberg (ca1930) and Sier van Rijn (1922-1989). They were responsible for designing the tubes for the underground metro, the shelters and 5 underground and 11 aboveground stations. The stations were executed in brutalist architecture, which is traceable in the expressive design approach with concrete and glass as the primary building materials. The architects expressed their philosophy about the use of raw material without raising attention to people. Bremen, et al (2020, pg 14) states that their design emphasizes the human scale, referring back to the discussion in that time period. The structure and technique dominate the expression (Ibelings, 2003). This is also visible in the design of the stations, for example: creating coarse finishes, varying the wall in depth and the notable structural columns dominantly present in the underground stations. In addition to this the colour was used to indicate routes and necessary information (Stadsgezichten: Metro Oostlijn, 2010). The architects won the Merkelbach Prize for this design in 1980 and another prize considering the building material, called the concrete prize in the following year, 1981.



Figure 11: The new underground metro is constructed in the middle lane of the street (1972). The street provides enough space for these events showing minimal disruption, in opposite of the city centre.

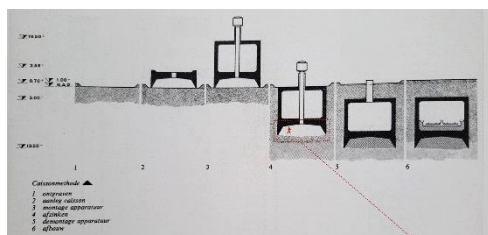


Figure 12: Illustrated construction method, Caisson, used for the metro.

The construction method used for the underground line is called Caisson. With this method large components of the underground tube were first constructed above ground level and afterwards lowered in to the ground for approximately 13 metres, see image 12. The first ride on the metro line was filled with journalists and municipal officers. A video, on the youtube channel: Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld & Geluid (2001) shows how the transport goes underground after the metro passed Amstel station. The reporter describes it as: ‘Smoothly and comfortably, the train

zoomed towards Wibautstraat (underground) station. Above ground, many large offices are located which inspired the decoration at this station. This decoration shows clearly that the new newspaper district of Amsterdam is located here.’

At the end of constructions, the well-intended metro line encountered a negative perception. ‘*The changes in 1980 take their toll on the character of the Oostlijn.*’ (Bremen et al., 2020, pg. 19).

Drug abuse, pollution and the feeling of insecurity.

Problems such as fare evasion, graffiti vandalism and drug dealing were made easier with the underground transport. The so-called design strategies against vandalism, for example varying the depth of the walls did not work in preventing graffiti and the closed off structures created nooks and crannies which got covered in multiple types of fluids. The drug dealers did not only have an easy escape route, as Bremen et al. (2020) calls it drug shuttles, but also invisibility. These issues were new in the 1980’s and thus not taken into account in the design, which resulted into avoidance of certain metro stations, including Wibautstraat. Bremen et al (2020) states in their book: ‘*it became an underground hotel for addicts and the homeless, which brought a negative image on the street.*’

The municipality of Amsterdam found it difficult to deal with this and declared the neighbourhood on Wibautstraat an emergency area. In a documentary from the early 2000, a neighbourhood watch association was presented in the Wibautstraat under the cooperation of the municipality’s project, called Plus Point. Employees from Plus Point bureau, some of whom were former hooligans and immigrants, would walk through the neighbourhood and try to limit the problems (Steunpunt Pluspunt [Retroxx], 2001).



Figure 13: Metro station Wibautstraat shows the brutalist approach on street level. During the 80’s protests and vandalism took over presenting a negative atmosphere in Wibautstraat.

Chapter four: Refurbishing Wibautstraat since 2000

Wibautstraat started to encounter a shift.

In the upcoming years it became visible how the focus on better housing became more prominent in the built environment. In 1992 the first Bouwbesluit was launched describing building features, like noise, ventilation and daylight, with the necessary requirements. Later in 2003 a newer version was launched with an alteration, for example: deregulating some requirements. The latest version launched in 2012, which is still in practise, adjusting parts regarding, renovation, reconstruction and more. (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2012).

In 2005 the newspapers editorial office planned on rebuilding the Paroolcomplex, due to 'old' age, 30 years, as the building didn't meet the right climate control standards. OMA (since 1975), an architectural firm positioned in Rotterdam won the design competition with a new office design of a high tower, exceeding 50 meters. The government supported this project due to the complications in refurbishing the location. There would be re-parcelling, demolishing and constructing a new building. Nevertheless costs affected the outcome of this project exceeding the original agreement. This resulted in international investors backing out of the deal (Beusekamp, 2006). The alternative was to move locations, to Diemen-Zuid, but this was not preferable. This concluded in staying for another 2 years at Wibautstraat, until 2007, when all newspaper offices moved to the Init building located in the city centre of Amsterdam. After two years of vacancy, TrouwAmsterdam opened a new cultural venue in the Trouw building, including a restaurant and a nightclub in the basement. The nightclub in particular was a big success. The huge fully isolated space where printing presses of the former newspapers used to rattle was considered a good location for a new night club. For this new function not much had to be done about the building, the essence was to create a real community with this club. Next to the great possibilities for Dutch artist receiving a podium, the club not only got Dutch recognitions but also internationally, resembling the wild rave clubs in Berlin (3FM, 2019). *'Music purists and students, looking for an adventurous night out, stood side by side on the dance floor'* (Bockting, 2014). In two



Figure 14: Club TROUW introduced a nightlife in Wibautstraat, since 2009.

years ClubTrouw received a 24 hour-permit and the club continued to exist for 3 more years, until November 2013 when the owner decided to sell the building. These past five years, nightclub Trouw, benefited Wibautstraat in creating a vibrant nightlife, which wasn't active before.

In 2015 to 2016, the Paroolcomplex has been undergoing a transformation, becoming one of the biggest student hotels in Amsterdam housing over 500 students. The architect, Hylke F. Zijlstra, working at the architectural firm Penta Architecten found it important to keep the atmosphere alive regarding its prominent history. Nevertheless the building needed to meet the current regulations, referring to Bouwbesluit 2012 (Gevelbouw, 2016). When looking at the transformation it is visible that the Trouw building undertook the most changes, like an expansion on the frontside and adding two floors on top of the building at the back, here the architects used different materials as finish instead of leaving the concrete insight. A connection was made between the Parool tower and the low-rise Trouw building to place the entrance of the student hotel, see image 15. Via the entrance it is possible to access other facilities located in the building (Stadsdeel Oost Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014). The overall concept of the intertwined volumes remained, but the transformation did exceed the original volume by adding structures and removing them.



Figure 15: transformation Studenthotel (2016)



Figure 16: Transformation Volkshotel (2013)



Figure 17: Transformation Wibautstraat (2017)

Trouw was not the only club contributing to the nightlife in Wibautstraat. As the neighbour across the street, De volkskrant building, ended up empty just like the Paroolcomplex. Stichting Urban Resort, owner of the building, decided to make the space accessible for creative entrepreneurs becoming one of the biggest cultural breeding grounds. Canvas, a club/restaurant, was created by such an entrepreneur and opened up in 2007. After 2011 De Volkskrant building was being transformed into De Volkshotel, a multifunctional building housing a budget hotel containing 172 rooms, a restaurant, the nightclub Canvas and more. The Architect, Steven Steenbruggen, made drawings according to the existing layout using the open floorplans and existing grid. He made sure there was enough space for referring back to the history of the building, which was executed in the smaller, mostly interior, details. For upgrading the acoustics, a method was used called box in box and the façade remained with geometric simplicity, still replacing the tiling with plaster (*Volkshotel*, 2014). A short documentary video shows the whole transformation of the office building, like changing the letters on top of the building, re-using half of them and making new ones (foskojong, 2015). The overall building structure and the main design of the façade remained intact, still referring back to the previous user: De Volkskrant.

The transformation of the Parooldriehoek was a big project for Wibautstraat and contributed to an even bigger plan, made by the governmental institutes on refurbishing Wibautstraat. In 2009, a rapport was produced describing the course of the overall project, called Wibaut aan de Amstel.



Figure 18: Refurbished Wibautstraat according to municipal plans: Wibaut aan de Amstel (2011). The street consists of two car lanes accompanied by a green lane in the middle with trees and along the sides, dividing slow and fast traffic.

The main aim of the report was to act cohesively with the enormous changes that appeared, like the newspaper offices, but also the rise of new educational institutions, de HvA Amstelcampus. The vision regarding the Wibautstraat was to improve public quality and reconnect the areas in the surrounding neighbourhood. Next to reconstructing public buildings, the metro line and the street itself would undergo an important transformation improving the use of public transport and creating an urban boulevard (Projectbureau Wibaut aan de Amstel, 2009). The design for the refurbishment of Wibautstraat was also presented in 2009, mostly focussing on creating a cohesive look and improving the public space by adding greenery and providing traffic-safety. Maarse (2018) states that the main goal was to refurbish the street to be lovable and nice again instead of being described as a racetrack. The new design proposed using the long characteristic street and amplify the impact. The biggest improvement was the addition of 4 rows of trees, where 2 rows would stand high in the middle of the street dividing the direction of fast traffic and one row on each side of the road providing protection by separating fast and slow traffic, as seen in figure 18. The amount of parking space would stay selective, by removing it along the road to a more invisible solution within the surrounded facilities. The materials chosen for this project were carefully selected, corresponding to the now-called Puccini method, used to dress the urban context in Amsterdam since 2009 to create cohesion throughout the street. The street ended up with a straight clear profile using symmetry and green for dividing dominant traffic, resulting in one of the major urban developments in Amsterdam east (Hoogma et al., 2009). These urban developments were concluded in 2011.

Moving back to the head of Wibautstraat, where it all started. In 2003 the first plans were conducted for a new function at the head of Wibautstraat (De week, 2004). The monumental buildings ended up empty, providing space for a new function, a school district, which could house the whole HvA campus. First the traditional buildings were taken care of in 2009. With a minimal approach, as the former tax office received a monumental status in 2009, the building was renovated and a new extension was added receiving the name: Kohnstammhuis. De Raad van de Arbeid building only got renovated remaining respectful, even without having any status (De Fauwe, 2005) changing the name to: Brenno Premselahuis. The further developments of the campus included additional facilities, like auditorium, restaurants and kitchens, a sport hall, a parking garage and a subterranean bicycle park. The original Wibauthuis was not preferred and it got demolished, making space for a new and higher building carrying the same name (Dow Jones Institutional News, 2011). In 2007 the local residence and action groups tried protesting to prevent demolition of the building, but with no success (Monté, 2007). The local inhabitants were also hesitant about the idea of a school district, including all the

students (De week, 2004). The last added building was the additional Conradhuis, positioned across the Brenno Premselahuis, which was designed by a cooperation between Powerhouse Company, De Architecten Cie. And Marc Koehler Architects and finished in 2021. The building is fourteen stories high and aimed for the title of most sustainable educational building in the Netherlands, receiving the



Figure 19: HvA Amstelcampus with additional buildings, including the new Wibauthuis. Wibautstraat has become a education boulevard (2018).

BREEAM sustainability certificate (Kreule, 2018). As the building opened just one year ago, the building is not visible in figure 19. The building stands connected through a grand atrium with its neighbour, the TheoTijssenhuis.

This last addition to the HvA Amstel campus resulted in a true educational boulevard.

Chapter five: Current plans in Wibautstraat

Wibautstraat will always continue contributing to the urban development plans considered for East Amsterdam. The Gemeenteraad Amsterdam, (2021) describes the goals for East Amsterdam in the overall Omgevingsvisie Amsterdam 2050 and refers to upcoming plans. One example is the participation in developing Kenniskwartieren. The ambition here is to provoke interaction between large and small scale, conducting research and innovation within an area. Wibautstraat is a good example working towards these goals, as the street becomes more divers; mixing housing, office and education. This Kenniskwartier is currently expressed in a Master plan, called Knowledge Mile. This project was initiated in 2015 by cooperation of entrepreneurs within the area and governmental and educational institutes. Wibautstraat is one of the three connected streets, next to Weesperstraat and Valkenburgerstraat, which is used as an experimental area creating a green sustainable environment within the city. By 2025 Wibautstraat will participate in this green axe, showcasing several methods and techniques as an example for future districts in Amsterdam. The plan is structured in three scales, covering the streets, general places and buildings. The refurbishment in 2011 was a head start for covering the streets and hardscape, Wibautstraat will continue making adjustments and small projects considering the smaller scales. Greenery was already a big part of the AUP from 1935, covering public space for social interaction and connection, resulting a continuous development of the urban site, still improving, even after so many years.

It is interesting to see how Wibautstraat will behave if or when Amsterdam will push through plans for a low-traffic only city centre. The municipal of Amsterdam is conducting this experiment with Weesperstraat, connected to Wibautstraat, to see if it will have a positive outcome (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021).



Figure 20: upcoming plans for Wibautstraat, contributing as case study in a new project called Knowledge Mile. The goal is introducing greenery in the existent city (2025).

Conclusion *How did architecture contribute to reshaping Wibautstraat over the years?*

Wibautstraat, located in East Amsterdam, has visually changed over the last decades. With municipal urban developments and redevelopments throughout the years the street provided space for the construction of public buildings, but its main function for connecting the city stayed. These public buildings had influence on reshaping the street corresponding with social needs and economical developments.

In 1849 the trainstation Weesperstation provided a connection between Amsterdam and Utrecht which became the foundation for the future of the Wibautstraat. The municipality considered the street a necessary axe providing accessibility into the city centre, envisioning it as a monumental gateway. In the 1950's this was achieved with the first two buildings; De Raad van de Arbeid and De Centrale Belastingenkantoor. Both governmental institutes were constructed as traditional architectural buildings using elements like symmetry, grand entrances and building materials like brick. Respected architects were chosen for this commission resulting in De Centrale Belastingenkantoor building to become a national monument. A counter movement reacted to these institutional buildings in the shape of the former Patrimonium school. This building disrupted the straight lines by rotating the building a little. This was purely done for accuiering a social connection between public and private, which the municipal buildings lacked. The school was constructed using building materials like concrete and glas to create modules following a functional approach inspired by Le Corbusier. This building also became a national monument, due to its direct relation to Le Corbusier. The last institutional building in Wibautstraat received a lot of mixed reactions. The economy grew and a new office building for the governmental institute arose in Wibautstraat. The Wibauthuis was constructed next to the monumental gate, standing out because of the modern architectural approach. With a faster, cheaper prefabricated building method using mostly concrete, Wibauthuis viewed a lightweighted building with a glass curtain wall as façade. In addition to this office, public transport was increased in Wibautstraat. In the upcoming years the traffic would only continue to rise resulting in a big hazard for the inhabitants. Due to a more extended freedom for private contractors the street became attractive for housing offices. The municipality encouraged this by luring in newspaper companies.

Within the 1960's in Wibautstraat three newspaper companies, Het Parool, De Volkskrant and Trouw, arrived. The Parooltoren and Volkskrantgebouw were both constructed by well known architects from Rotterdam using again a modern and functional approach. The high-rise buildings tried to represent their function as newspapers companies with again using concrete as main building material and a glass façade for a sober and clean appearance. The buildings differed from each other in terms of positioning on the street. The Volkskrantgebouw was a more simple, rectangular, shape building, without looking for interaction with the street. Whereas Het Paroolcomplex, consisted of a high-rise tower and a low-rise building, continuous reached for this interaction between the buildings and the street. The street reached a point where it facilitated big office buildings hovering over a fast track road. The inhabitants were not pleased with the municipality focussing on the economical growth of the city instead of providing better housing. Which led to multiple protests along the street, claiming it: The ugliest street of Amsterdam. The municipality reacted to this with new plans for refurbishing Wibautstraat with the construction of the new underground metro. was one of the biggest changes in Wibautstraat. With the rise of Bijlmer a new connection was needed between the centrum of Amsterdam and the South-eats regions, making this one of the biggest plans for refurbishment. The metro stations and underground tubes were constructed in brutalist architecture, an architectural movement following after modernism, emphasizing the human scale and expressing this in construction methods using concrete.

Unfortunately in the 1980's and 90's new problems, like drugs and vandalism, occurred within society, resulting in unsafe situations. Also around Wibautstraat stations, leading to a point where the street was considered an emergency area.

To revive the street and create a better environment new plans were made, around 2000, to tackle a whole area in Amsterdam East, including the reshape of Wibautstraat. This resulted in a plan called Wibaut aan de Amstel. The plan reacted to the unsafe situations, like the position of fast traffic next to slow traffic, the needed transformation of the post-war buildings to meet the right requirements of regulation and the lack of cohesion within the street. The transformation projects were efficient for the newspaper district, where vacancy occurred. New functions arrived with this transformation, like the student hotel, the Volkshotel and nightclubs, contributing to the livelihood of the street during the day and night. The studenthotel was mostly necessary due to the upcoming educational district at the head of Wibautstraat. Plans were made to transform the municipal institutes into educational institutes creating the HvA Amstelcampus. Unfortunately this resulted in destroying the original Wibauthuis, loosing architectural values along with it. The new Wibauthuis and other newly builds in the HvA campus made the Wibautstraat a true educational boulevard, including the transformation of the Cygnus Lyceum. The transformations respected the original architectural mindset and were provided with solutions that could comply with the necessary regulations. Next to this, the street itself got a big transformation, diminishing the focus on fast traffic, improving the use of public transport and creating a green urban boulevard. Wibautstraat's overall function shifted from office/working to living, whilst the main function, connection, is still present. As the street contributes to the highroad connections around the city, Wibautstraat also contributes to an experimental project connecting greenery with surrounded neighbourhoods. This Masterplan, called Knowledge Mile from 2021, provides the base for creating Kenniskwartieren within the city and experiments with new methods and solutions for adding greenery into the existing city on a street level, building level and the level of general places. This means that the architecture present in Wibautstraat will continue to contribute to the shape the atmosphere within the street.

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Figure 19

(Altered by author) Amstelcampus. (2019b, December 16). Bouwvormen. Hogeschool Van Amsterdam. <https://www.hva.nl/amstelcampus/de-amstelcampus/wat-is-de-amstelcampus/nieuwbouw-en-renovatie/bouwvormen.html>

Figure 20

Knowledge Mile Park - De Gezonde Stad. (2023, February 24). De Gezonde Stad. <https://degezonestad.org/projecten/knowledge-mile-park>